New Book Emphasizes Smoking Bans Unneeded

"There is simply no justification for banning cigarette smoking in decently ventilated public places," writes Donald B. Louria, M.D., in his new book, *Stay Well*, a layman's guide to preventive medicine.

The argument that cigarette smoking by others causes disease in healthy persons is just not convincing, Louria writes. "The claim that smoking injures the nonsmoker is unsubstantiated."

In Review

Louria, a graduate of Harvard Medical School, is currently chairman of the Department of Preventive Medicine and Community Health at the New Jersey Medical School.

He says the "anti-smoking lobby has become hysterical" in attempting to restrict smoking in most public places. Louria does stress that smokers in a confined area such as a car or elevator should have the courtesy to ask whether the smoke is bothersome.

Louria asks, "Can passive smoking hurt the heart?" His answer, "There is not one bit of evidence that it can damage the healthy heart."

Hirayama Study

The New Jersey physician criticizes the 1981 study by Takeshi Hirayama of Japan, which claimed that nonsmoking wives of smokers had an increased risk of lung cancer.

There was no attempt in this study to analyze the type of tumor, Louria writes. Some types of lung tumors are statistically related to cigarette smoking; others are not, he says.

Without this analysis, Louria says, the Hirayama study is "uninterpretable." The report, he says, "deserves further investigation . . . but it should be viewed with a great deal of skepticism. By itself it proves nothing."

"Cigarette smoking by others," the New Jersey physician concludes, "does not cause cancer, bronchitis, heart disease, or any other hazard to the health of those nearby."

(Photo by Charles Buchanan)

Even with improved varieties of tobacco, it came as a surprise to North Carolinians to find the plant growing in a three-eighths inch crack in the sidewalk. J. M. Smith of Kinston, holding the flower heads that usually are cropped to insure better leaf growth, jokingly notes that he can't sell his "downtown" tobacco since he has no allotment under the Federal Government's price support program.

Quote of The Observer

On Jan. 1, 1983, more than 50 million Americans will find that the "Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act" of 1982 is anything but equitable. These millions will begin digging deeper in their pockets to meet an extra Federal tax burden only because they choose to smoke.

The doubling of the Federal excise on cigarettes will ultimately have a negative effect on virtually everyone associated with the tobacco industry, from consumer to grower.

The tax increase is discriminatory, for it will be imposed only on smokers. It will also place the greatest burden proportionately on lower and middle-income consumers. They will be forced to pay a greater percentage of their incomes to meet this new tax as compared to the more affluent. . . . Prior to this bill, cigarettes were already among the most heavily taxed consumer products in the nation.

The harm created by any significant reduction in cigarette sales will by no means be confined to tobacco manufacturers. Their suppliers—paper transportation, chemical companies, and hundreds of other businesses—will feel the negative impact of the tax boost.

During the next three years, it is imperative that our elected officials, and everyone supporting tobacco, do everything within their power to insure that the Federal tax on cigarettes returns to 8 cents per package in 1985 as stipulated in the bill.

Without such action, historical precedent indicates, the new tax will be constantly extended until it and its harmful effects become permanent. If it is removed, we can look to a better future for the tobacco industry.

J. Paul Sticht

Excerpted from a guest column by:
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Social Stress Called Heart Disease Factor

Constant social stress can lead to higher risk of heart disease, according to the lead study in the September-October edition of Arteriosclerosis, an American Heart Association journal.

The researchers at Bowman Gray School of Medicine, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, N.C., studied 30 monkeys. Fifteen of the primates were moved frequently from group to group throughout the 22 month experiment, providing an unstable social environment. The rest were not moved around.

Dr. Jay Kaplan, one of the researchers, said they were attempting to see if psychosocial factors contribute to the progression of hardening of the arteries (atherosclerosis).

The animals were classified as dominant—able to defeat others in fights—or submissive. The dominant monkeys in unstable situations showed significantly greater coronary artery atherosclerosis than dominant animals in stable social groups, the researchers found. Also, the dominant monkeys had more hardening of the arteries than those judged submissive.

Inquiry

The scientists hypothesize that changing social conditions provided recurrent, stressful threats to the status of dominant animals. Other risk factors were ruled out by the researchers.

Their thesis, they said, is consistent with current thinking that individual behavioral characteristics have a role in the development of coronary disease in humans.

Hard-driving, competitive, impatient, aggressive people are susceptible to coronary disease, the scientists said.

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